ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An ink follower which has stable followability regardless of a pen body specification, a flow rate for writing and a writing speed and does not cause back leaking of the ink originating in shortage in the ink follower in the middle of writing and scattering of the ink follower by impact applied to the pen body and which does not flow out from the ink reservoir in storing the pen body at a high temperature and provides a stable flow rate for writing. An ink follower is also provided which prevents the ink from volatilizing by shutting off the ink from the outside air (volatilization preventing property) and which prevents the ink from leaking in writing with the pen turned upward. The ink follower, for example, contains a non-volatile or slightly volatile organic solvent and a non-styrene base thermoplastic elastomer which is soluble or swollen in the organic solvent and showing viscoelasticity which is predominant in elastic response.

Please amend the paragraph at page 10, line 11, as follows:

Accordingly, the present invention provides an ink follower meeting the object described above by assuming the respective constitutions described in the following items (1) to [[(3)]] (2).

Please amend the paragraph at page 10, line 15, as follows:

(1) An ink follower ~~characterized by~~ containing a non-volatile or slightly volatile organic solvent and a non-styrene base thermoplastic elastomer which is soluble or swollen in the organic solvent and showing viscoelasticity which is predominant in elasticity response, wherein a value of an oil separation degree test (60°C, 24 hours) according to JIS K 2220-5.7-1993 for the above ink follower is 0.2 to 15%.

Please delete the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 4, which starts with "(3) The ink follower."

Please amend the paragraph at page 11, line 12, as follows:

The ink follower of the present invention ~~is characterized by~~ comprises an ink follower containing a non-volatile or slightly volatile organic solvent and a non-styrene base thermoplastic elastomer which is soluble or swollen in the organic solvent and showing viscoelasticity which is predominant in elasticity response, and it is characterized by that a value of an oil separation degree test (60°C, 24 hours) according to JIS K 2220-5.7-1993 for the above ink follower is 0.2 to 15%.

Please amend the paragraph at page 11, line 18, as follows:

As described above, the ink follower of the present invention has to (a) contain the non-volatile or slightly volatile organic solvent and the non-styrene base thermoplastic elastomer which is soluble or swollen in the organic solvent, [[and]] (b) show viscoelasticity which is predominant in elasticity response[[,]] and (c) have a value of 0.2 to 15% in an oil separation degree test (60°C, 24 hours) according to JIS K 2220-5.7-1993 for the above ink follower and each constitution of (a) to (c) ~~each constitution of (a) and (b)~~ shall be described below in details.

Please amend the paragraph at page 18, line 1, as follows:

In the ink follower of the present invention, the non-volatile or slightly volatile organic solvent and the non-styrene base thermoplastic elastomer which is soluble or swollen in the organic solvent have to be contained, and in addition thereto, (b) viscoelasticity which is predominant in elasticity response has to be shown. Usually, tan δ can be used as an index of a strength of viscoelasticity. In this case, tan δ is a value meaning loss modulus/storage modulus. The large value thereof (tan $\delta>1$) shows that the fluidity is high (or predominant in viscosity), and the small value (tan $\delta<1$) shows that the follower is solid (or predominant in ~~viscosity~~ elasticity).

Please amend the paragraph at page 19, line 11, as follows:

In the present invention, assumed is a constitution in which ~~the effects of the invention can be exhibited by~~ (a) ~~containing~~ the non-volatile or slightly volatile organic solvent and the non-styrene base thermoplastic elastomer which is soluble or swollen in the organic solvent are contained and (b) ~~showing~~ viscoelasticity ~~which~~ that is predominant in elasticity response~~, and a constitution~~ is shown and, in which

base oil component is slightly deposited in the ~~above~~ ink follower predominant in elasticity ~~is more preferably assumed~~.

Please amend the paragraph at page 20, line 11, as follows:

The deposition of the above base oil component can be compared by carrying out an oil separation degree test, to be specific, an oil separation degree test (60°C, 24 hours) according to JIS K 2220-5.7-1993. In the present invention, in order to assume a constitution in which the base oil component is slightly deposited, a value in the oil separation degree test described above has to fall [[falls]] in a range of ~~preferably~~ 0.2 to 15 %, [[more]] preferably 1.0 to 10 %.

Please amend the paragraph at page 25, line 11, as follows:

In the ink follower of the present invention thus constituted, an object thereof is to provide an ink follower which has stable followability regardless of a pen body specification, a flow rate for writing and a writing speed and does not cause back leaking of the ink originating in shortage of the ink follower in the middle of writing and scattering of the ink follower by impact applied to the pen body and which does not flow out from the ink reservoir in storing the pen body at a high temperature and provides a stable flow rate for writing by containing the non-volatile or slightly volatile organic solvent and the non-styrene base thermoplastic elastomer which is soluble or swollen in the organic solvent and showing viscoelasticity which is predominant in elasticity response and controlling a value of an oil separation degree test (60°C, 24 hours) according to JIS K 2220-5.7-1993 for the above ink follower to 0.2 to 15%. Also, it is a matter of course that the ink is prevented from volatilizing by

shutting off the ink from the outside air (volatilization preventing property) and that the ink is prevented from leaking in writing with the pen turned upward.

Please amend the last line of page 27 as follows:

~~Inon-exchanged~~ Ion-exchanged water balance

Please amend the paragraph at page 37, line 14, as follows:

O: flowability of the ink and unevenness in the density are almost not changed from those in the initial state